

Did you know...

The dirt on indoor air quality

The University of Technology Sydney has been researching the area of indoor plants and air quality for over fifteen years, so what's the latest? Professor Margaret Burchett from UTS gives **Ambius** customers a special briefing...

The air we breathe and the value of plants

Worldwide research has shown that indoor plants can absorb all types of urban air pollution. The goal of office air-conditioning is to provide comfortable temperatures while allowing enough outdoor air input to allow adequate ventilation for people to work in.

Generally it will filter out some of the dust, and removes some of the humidity. But air-conditioning does not normally filter

out any of the gaseous contaminants of incoming air.

Urban air is always contaminated by gaseous emissions from fossil fuel combustion and contrary to what people often believe, indoor air is almost always more polluted than outdoors.

This is because when the contaminated air is drawn indoors, it mixes with more pollutants derived from indoor sources. Outdoor fuel emissions include nitrogen and sulfur oxides; carbon dioxide (CO₂) and carbon monoxide (CO); and other 'air toxics' or 'volatile organic' compounds (VOCs; eg benzene, toluene, PAHs, etc).

Indoor air has more CO₂ (from breathing and slow outdoor input), more dust and VOCs from furnishings, computers, copiers, solvents etc., and more of the same types of fossil fuel products if there any gas appliances are used.

And now the good news

Our research here at UTS and overseas work have shown comprehensively that indoor plants make a positive impact on indoor air quality. So what's the latest on this?

In a nutshell – indoor plants really do help to clean the air. It's not just the leaves but the whole plant system – that is, the leaves, roots and potting media. They actually suck up and detoxify all the nasty gases released in offices by furnishings, carpets, photocopiers and printers.

To do this, the plants first need to be 'switched on' to urban living by being exposed to the pollutants over a few days – then they can take about as much VOC as we give them (hurray for your **Ambius** indoor plant technician who cares for your plants!).



Professor Margaret Burchett in the UTS laboratories, studying the effects of indoor plants and air quality.

We've also found that all indoor plants seem to work well to remove VOCs – it's not just a select few. So choose the ones that work best for your office light and the ones you or your clients like.

Different plant sizes seem to work too! So the smaller 200mm and larger 300mm pots will work equally well (ie. You don't need a jungle in your office to do the job).

If you go for the trendy vertical garden then you will also be pleased to know that the little plants work just as well in office when in vertical garden or tower – working together, they too, offer the same benefits.

So rest assured – your beautiful **Ambius** indoor plants are hard at work sucking up the nasties from the air... without you even noticing!

Professor Margaret Burchett, University of Technology Sydney, E: Margaret.Burchett@uts.edu.au

Interested in this area? For more information on indoor air quality and plants, ask your **Ambius** Interior Plantscape Technician for our free information sheet on indoor air quality or go to our websites.

www.ambiusindoorplants.com.au www.ambius.co.nz





Ask the Plant Guru...

Top tips from the plant guru

There is now general agreement within the scientific community that indoor plants improve the indoor environment and are useful weapons in the fight against the modern phenomenon known as sick building syndrome.

Use trough planters as natural screens. They reduce noise and are useful as barriers to segregate walkways and work areas.

Over 80% of indoor plants are killed through over-watering. It's always best to leave it to the experts – your friendly **Ambius** interior plantscape technician.

Ambius – Greener on the inside

You may have already heard that Rentokil Tropical Plants changed its name to **Ambius** earlier this year.

We're excited about the change and passionate about helping our customers become '**Greener on the inside**' so we're running an online competition to help kick-start your green interior ways.

Winners will receive an initial session with a Green Star accredited interior environment consultant from GHD, who will offer general advice on how you can make your office interiors greener.

The initial consultation will consist of a walk through assessment by experienced GHD interior and environmental consultants with a view to presenting a verbal report describing areas that would benefit from an upgrade to improve the interior space in a sustainable manner.

All you have to do is tell us in 25 words or less: **Why does your office need to be greener on the inside?**

But hurry, the competition closes June 30th 2009. See our websites for details: www.ambiusindoorplants.com.au (Australia) and www.ambius.co.nz (NZ).

Make a BIG statement

Not one for the wall flowers...these stunning Schiavello Vertical Garden walls will make your clients realize that when it comes to interior style, you mean business...

Ambius install and maintain these vertical garden walls so they always look great, command attention and offer an instant green zone for your customers and staff. Call now for a quote for one of these in your office.



Image courtesy of GHD

For more information contact **Ambius**:

New Zealand 0508 AMBIUS www.ambius.co.nz

Australia 1300 AMBIUS www.ambiusindoorplants.com.au



green building council australia
MEMBER